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Some Remarks
on
Rheumatism

By
John S. Belt

of
Virginia

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Some Remarks on Rheumatism

Rheumatism is placed by Dr Cullen in his first class Pyrexiae, under the second Phlogmasiae. The characteristics of this disease as assigned by him, are pyrexia, pain about the parts (following) the tract of the Muscles, attacking the Knees and large articulations in preference to those of the feet or hands, increased by external heat.

To enter into a minute detail of this disease, or every Circumstance which in the beginning exist— or afterwards may arise, calculated to influence the practice— even could I believe myself prepared for the undertaking, is not now my intention— nor does it seem at all necessary. I prescribe to myself a range of much less extent, and shall be satisfied in collecting into a condensed compass, a few observations of more general application. Rheumatism

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is divided by all practical writers into
Acute and Chronic.

I shall confine my Remarks to the first
& these forms of the disease.

Acute Rheumatism may arise at all
seasons of the Year, but more particularly
in the Spring and Fall, when the vicissitudes
of weather are more frequent from heat
to cold. It may attack persons at any
period of life, though it seldom occurs
till after the age of puberty.

Professor Chapman observes that he
has seen it in very young Children, at-
tacking especially the head, so as to give
rise to the suspicion of the existence of
Hydrocephalus Internus. But as mentioned
above, persons, after the period of puberty
and the middle aged, are more liable to
the disease than at any other time of life.

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No Complaint attacks in a greater variety of forms than this. It generally fixes on the upper or lower extremities - Though it by no means confines itself, to those parts - on the contrary it attacks the Lungs, Livers, Heart, Head and diaphragm, producing Lumbago, Sciatica &c. Besides these it has been known to attack the Surfaces of the body - the internal layers of Muscles, and even the Skin itself.

Causes. Acute Rheumatism generally arises, from those Causes which produce Pneumonic inflammation and other diseases of a similar Nature, such as the application of Cold to the body when unusually warm, or when any part of it is exposed to the influence of Cold, whilst the other parts are kept warm; particularly when it is applied by means of Moisture, as bathing

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wet or damp clothing, sleeping in damp
sheets, lying on the wet ground (particularly
when sleeping) coming from warm crowded
rooms into the cold air so as to check the
perspiration, is a very fruitful cause
of the disease. Besides these other causes
may bring the disease into action—
as violent strains, violent spasms and
exertions—and in some there would
seem to be a predisposition to take on
the disease without any evident cause.

Symptoms. This disease, for the most part,
comes on with symptoms analogous to those
of other febrile affections—such as lassitude
rigours, hot dry skin and restlessness, suc-
ceeded by loss of appetite, great anxiety and
nausea, attended with a hard, full and
quick pulse. When blood is drawn from
a vein and coagulates, it exhibits an

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inflammatory Surface. The tongue, in the
beginning, is usually covered with white
fur, as the disease advances and when
it becomes complicated with gastric ir-
ritation, it sometimes is incrustated with
a dark brown matter. After a short
time, severe pains are felt in different
parts of the body—more parts clearly in
the larger joints—sometimes the pain is
confined to a few joints—in other cases
it attacks many at the same time. Shif-
ting from one part to another, leaving
redness, swelling and great tenderness to
the touch.

Dr Cullen says, it seldom happens, that
a swelling coming on does not relieve the
pain of the part—But the swelling does
not always take off the pain of the part
intirely. There is an increase of fever

most of
the night, a
few hours
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most of the
other ones.
The first
part of the
night was
very cold,
and the
wind was
very strong.
The second
part of the
night was
very warm,
and the
wind was
very light.

Inwards evening, which continues, through
the night, attended with considerable increase
of pain. The face is sometimes flushed—
though not generally so—the head in a
great majority of cases, remains free from
pain—though, sometimes, it is very severely
affected. In most cases there seems but
little tendency to delirium.

The stomach is not much affected—
except when the disease occurs in those
districts of Country subject to intermittent
fever, and it takes on that form. Then
in many cases we have considerable derang-
ement of that organ. The bowels are reg-
ularly constipated. In many cases sweat-
ing arises very early in the progress of the
disease, but is seldom free or copious. It
in the most part does not remove the pain
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disease the urine is high coloured, and, in the commencement, without sediment - but, as the disease advances, the Fever has more distinct remissions, and the urine deposits a catarrhous sediment. This however, does not prove entirely critical, for the disease often continues a long time after the appearance of such sediment. As stated above, such are the symptoms that usually usher in and accompany this disease - But sometimes the local, preceeds the Constitutional symptoms, for several days.

As regards the nature of the inflammation in this disease, I am much gratified to hear it in my power to give it in Professor Chapmans own words He says, "All those writers who have treated of this complaint, appear to consider it as a general case of

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Phlegmasiac, or in other words, a fever at-
tended by local inflammation. That there
is a very high degree of action in the af-
fected part, cannot be denied. But it
would appear, that as in Scab. the action
to a certain degree is a peculiar one,
having none or very few of the properties
of Phlegmonous inflammation. Much
as I have seen of this disease, only one
instance has ever come under my notice
in its terminating in suppuration pro-
funda, in the part. But, continues the
Protopos. I am not aware, that this peculiar-
ity of inflammation calls for any dif-
ference or modification of treatment, it
requires the same remedies, as in the ordin-
ary inflammatory affections.

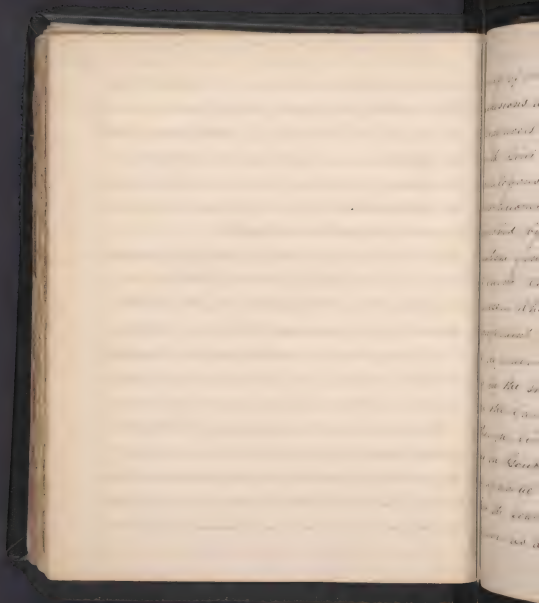
Prognosis When properly managed a cure
of acute Rheumatism, may almost always

[illegible]

is cured and widens as never proves fatal, until it attacks some vital part of the lungs runs into the Chronic. Cough & sometimes proves fatal. The symptoms indicative of Consumption are, diminution of power and force, in skin becoming perspirable, the bowels become loose, and in urine deposits a sediment.

Dr. Williams, in describing the seat of this disease, says "is the general mode of description, than that adopted by Dr. Cullen as, was to me required. The fibrous textures of the body, may be stated, as the true seat of Rheumatism, and most commonly, the tendinous substance is the part affected."

Rheumatism seldom proving fatal, few opportunities have offered of examining the parts after death. In the few, however, which have occurred, the disease is seated in the joints or their appendages a thick



lining of the membranes, accompanied with
adhesions and gelatinous effusions.

Diagnosis. Rheumatism may be confounded
with Gout. The diseases are, sometimes, so
analogous as to deceive the most experienced
practitioners, but may generally be distin-
guished by the following symptoms. Rheu-
matism generally occurs, in consequence of some
obvious cause. The Gout, without any such
cause. Rheumatism has no antecedent
complaint. Gout is preceded by symptoms of
a diseased Stomach. The seat of the one,
is in the smaller joints and that of the other
in the larger. The limbs in Rheumatism,
though swelled, have not the bright colour
as in Gout. After all however, the best
diagnostic symptom, is that Gout always
has its seat in the Stomach. Rheumatism
never as a primary affection

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Treatment. As acute Rheumatism presents itself, in this climate, it is a mark of high inflammatory action, and calls for the whole antiphlogistic plan of treatment, at the head of which, most undoubtedly, stands bloodletting. This remedy is called for, by the whole train of symptoms, exhibited in the disease, and should be repeated, so long as it is indicated, by the state of the pulse, the severity of the pain, and the general strength & condition of the patient. Cases may occur, however, in which it will be right to limit the use of the lancet to one or two bleedings, and then trust the case to the plan of treatment hereafter to be mentioned. While we are depleting by the lancet, it will become necessary to recur to purging, and the best articles certainly are Calomel & the Neutral Salts—either a large,

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combined, as the nature of the case may
demand, we should resort again to purging
any time it may seem necessary.

I am aware that emetics have been very
highly spoken of as a remedy in this dis-
ease. It would appear, however, that their
use should be restricted to those cases, of
this disease, occurring in Miasmatic Countries,
and blended with intermittent fever - and
here they act on a principle perfectly in-
ferrible - they relieve the stomach of its
gross contents, and prepare it for the
reception of other Remedies.

After the judicious employment of the
remedies mentioned, we shall find in a
majority of Cases an abatement of the more
violent Symptoms. At this time, we resort
to a set of Remedies, which, by the uni-
versal consent of practitioners, are em-

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ployed in the treatment of this disease.

My allusion is to the diaphoretics. But, it is obvious, they can only be beneficial, when much direct depletion has been procured. It is a fact well established, that sweating is always injurious, if employed in the early stage of inflammatory Rheumatism. When it comes on spontaneously, it seldom affords relief, — and very often aggravates the symptoms. When we resort to this class of remedies it should be remembered that the milder kind, are to be employed in the commencement — The best, under such circumstances undoubtedly are, the Antimonial and Nitrous preparations — These failing for the disease, not being removed we call into our aid, remedies of a more stimulating nature — The best of which is Dover's powder — and when sweat-

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is once brought on, it should be con-
stantly maintained, for not less than
twenty four hours. It is a good rule not
to permit the remedy until the disease is
bored or very great relief is afforded. If
the remedies employed fail, resort to warm
beverages and to the use of the Vapor
bath - this last should always be em-
ployed. The *Siphocampylus Virginiana*, The
Eupatorium *Perfoliatum* and the *Pyrola*
should all be tried. The *Semina* *Sinensis*
of *Colchicum* is a remedy of vast im-
portance in this disease. All these ar-
ticles failing we should resort to Mercu-
ry in combination with *Spicaeantha* and
Opium - this is an invaluable remedy -
with this I conclude my remarks on
the general treatment of Rheumatism.
Before leaving the subject I will say

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No remedy is better calculated to relieve the painful affections of the joints than local blood letting—either by cups or by leeches, and when these have been longed for enough—a succession of blisters to the part—as to keep up a discharge for some time will be found of great benefit. Cold applications ^{have} been highly recommended by the physicians of Russia. But general experience is against the practice, they have always been found to produce mischief. To relieve soreness and stiffness, of the parts which sometimes remain, after an attack of this disease, frictions with the hands or flesh brush—the warm baths—the warm salt baths—are excellent remedies, and should never be neglected.

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this disease (particularly the inflammatory)
should be very light - consisting of the far-
raceous articles - The patient should be
prohibited from all animal food - and
the use of all spiritous & fermented liquors.